

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 HA-05 MCT-01 ACDA-12
/094 W

-----004584 071445Z /50

R 071256Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4808

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 1652

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS ELAB, SHUM, AR (SMITH, OSCAR)
SUBJECT LABOR MINISTER REPLIES TO AFL-CIO TELEGRAM

1. LABOR MINISTER LIENDO HAS SHOWN LABATT
LETTER HE PLANS TO SEND TO AFL-CIO PRESIDENT
MEANY RESPONDING TO MR MEANY'S RECENT
TELEGRAM REGARDING THE ABDUCTION AND DIS
APPEARANCE OF BUENOS AIRES LIGHT AND POWER
WORKER LEADER OSCAR SMITH A YEAR AGO. LIENDO
CALLED THE AFL-CIO CABLE "CORRECT" IN FORM
AND SAID IT DESERVED A REPLY BECAUSE OF ITS
SERIOUS SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT. THE MINISTERS
LETTER WILL BE TRANSMITTED VIA ARGENTINE
EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. THE THRUST OF LIENDOS
REPLY IS THAT THE KIDNAPPING IS AN ABOMINABLE
ACT WHICH HAS CAUSED DISTRESS TO THE GOA AND
THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE IS BEING DONE TO
INVESTIGATE THE CASE AND BRING THE PERPETRATORS
TO JUSTICE.

2. LIENDO ALSO STATED THAT PRESIDENT VIDELA AND HE
HAD EACH SENT PERSONAL TIME LETTERS TO MRS SMITH,
ALTHOUGH THEY HAD NOT USEFUL OR ENLIGHTENING INFORMATION
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AT THEIR DISPOSAL TO REVEAL AS TO HER HUSBANDS WHERE
ABOUTS OR FATE.

3. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO ALERT AFL-CIO THAT LIENDO
LETTER IS ON ITS WAY.

4. LIENDO TOLD LABATT PRIVATELY HE FEARED THAT SMITH

WAS DEAD (SINCE NOTHING MORE HAS BEEN HEARD ABOUT HIM ALL THIS TIME).

5. COMMENT: AT THE TIME OF SMITHS DISAPPEARANCE THERE WAS SPECULATION THAT HIS KIDNAPPING MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED BY THOSE RESPONSIBLE TO FOIL A PRIVATE AGREEMENT REPORTEDLY REACHED BETWEEN LIENDO AND SMITH TO END A LIGHT ANDPOWER WORKERS STRIKE. ACCORDING TO ALLEGED EYE WITNESS ACCOUNTS OF THE KIDNAPPING, THE INCIDENT HAD ALL THE EARMARKS OF A TYPICAL SECURITY OPERATION AND IT HAS BEEN WIDELY SUSPECTED THAT THE ABDUCTION WAS THE WORK OF ONE OF THE GOVERNMENT SECURITY AGENCIES. SOME SOURCES CAST SUSPICION PARTICULARLY ON THE NAVY, INTERPRETING THE ACTION AS A WARNING AGAINST ANY LABOR LEADERS WHO MADE POLITICAL DEALS WITH THE SO CALLED "POPULIST WING" OF THE ARMY. EMBASSY COMPONENTS HAVE NO FURTHER INFORMATION WHICH CAN SHED LIGHT ON THIS INCIDENT. MOST TRADE UNION OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT SMITH IS PROBABLY DEAD.
CHAPLIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Channel Indicators: n/a
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Concepts: PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE, MISSING PERSONS, LABOR UNION OFFICIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Review Release Date: n/a
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